

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN
MEMORIAL FUND

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut State Legislature
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David Nee
Executive Director

Co-Chairs Senator Toni Harp and Representative John Gergagosian

Ranking Members Senator Dan Debicella and Representative Craig Miner



*The storyteller figure
symbolizes the values
of the Memorial
Fund—educating,
supporting and
inspiring our
children.*

In December 2008, the Trustees of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund approved a budget for 2009 that includes \$825,000 to match funds committed by the State to improve early childhood learning. We expect to make similar investments in 2010.

That means, in the next biennium, the State's investment of \$1.45 million could result in over \$1.70 million in additional funding from the Memorial Fund and other partnering foundations.

Two of these investment opportunities build on the partnership the Memorial Fund has had with the State in the last two years, in support of local community efforts to improve early childhood education and parent leadership. A third new initiative is under development with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and will focus on improving literacy for our most at-risk young students.

I would ask that you keep these funding opportunities in mind as you consider the State budget in these difficult times.

1. As you may know, the Memorial Fund partnered with the Early Childhood Education Cabinet in 2007 to support communities in developing local plans for improving and expanding early childhood programs. I believe that partnership to be a success. It has attracted the attention of the National Governors Association, among others. By June of this year, 23 communities will have early childhood plans that build on local assets and respond to local needs.

As we promised two years ago, we offer **\$300,000 to match State funds in each of the next two years for building on these plans and other communities' early childhood education planning efforts.** In the last biennium, the State's investment of \$900,000 was matched by more than \$1 million from private sources.

In addition, we offer to match **\$100,000 that the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) has committed to link health services to early childhood plans in several of the communities.** Thus we anticipate a

total of \$800,000 from private sources for follow-up activities that will build a better system for young children.

2. Two years ago, we also agreed to match the State dollar-for-dollar for new funds for parent leadership training. In the last two years, the State was able to match \$200,000 of a total of \$350,000 offered by the Memorial Fund. The resulting efforts were good. The total of small grants paid to support leadership training increased from a base of \$250,000 to a total of \$450,000 from the Memorial Fund and new State investments. The number of projects supported through the combined public and private funding effectively doubled.

The public and private partners have worked to streamline the small grants program and make it available to more communities. We are pleased by these developments and offer up to **\$250,000 in 2009 for every dollar the State puts in above the Parent Trust Fund's current public funding of \$250,000.** Thus, if the State budget includes \$500,000 in support of parent leadership training, a total of \$750,000 would be made available for local parent programs. It is our perspective that parent leadership is a critical cornerstone for building a system that works for very young children and their families. Also, at a time of budget retrenchment, the civic engagement that the programs generate is vital to community stability. The Parent Leadership Training Institute alone has generated 1.5 million volunteer hours.

3. Finally, we have set aside \$350,000 over the next two years for a literacy initiative in partnership with Annie E. Casey Foundation, other private funders, the Commission on Children, the State Department of Education and the Early Childhood Education Cabinet. We expect that our dollars will be matched by similar funding from the State and the Casey Foundation. Our collective aim is to support a five-year initiative that would set the standard for enhancing literacy for children from birth through age eight, through a two-generation strategy with full participation of parents and the community as well as instructional improvement in the K-12 system.

As you know, there had been a decline in State resources available for improving literacy even before the current budget crisis. This planned initiative would allow us to figure out what really works in one to three communities, and influence how future resources are invested when the economy returns to a more normal state.

Here is a summary of the offer for the next 2 years:

	Private 2009-10 Investments	State Biennium Investments
1. Building on Community Plans for Early Childhood		
Memorial Fund match	\$600,000	
Memorial Fund match for health	\$100,000	
Child Health & Development Institute match for health	\$100,000	
Total	\$800,000	\$900,000
2. Increasing Parent Leadership		
Memorial Fund match for Parent Leadership Training	\$250,000	\$250,000
3. Improving Early Literacy		
Memorial Fund match	\$350,000	
Annie E. Casey Foundation match	\$300,000	\$300,000
Totals	\$1,700,000	\$1,450,000

At the same time we are also working on a strategic plan for the Memorial Fund for the calendar years 2010 to 2014. The plan will be completed in June 2009, and the first round of grants will be made in December 2009 to fund programs for 2010. I fully expect that matching funds will continue to be a strong element of our design; such is our faith in the partnership with state government.

I would be happy to meet with you to confirm and clarify this offer.

David M. Nee
Executive Director
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund